



The President's Daily Brief

27 May 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Cairo has warmly received Podgorny and talks seem to be going well, despite a semiofficial editorial warning against foreign intervention. (Page 1)

The status of Cardinal Mindszenty is receiving fresh attention from Hungarian and Vatican diplomats. (Page 2)

The North Koreans suggest they might welcome visits by US newsmen. (Page 3)

The Soviets may be preparing to launch another Mars probe. (Page 3)

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EGYPT-USSR

Cairo's warm reception for President Podgorny since his arrival on Tuesday underscores Sadat's desire to reassure the Soviets that the recent purge of key Egyptian officials has not jeopardized Soviet interests. Moscow, which apparently took the initiative in arranging the visit, had seemed genuinely confused as to the import of the upheaval.

Initial reports that the Soviets have reaffirmed their wide-ranging commitments to Egypt suggest that the talks are proceeding smoothly. The Soviets presumably recognize that their influence in Egypt hinges less on connections with highly placed Egyptians than on Cairo's continuing dependence on Soviet military aid.

Amidst the generally pro-Soviet tone in the Egyptian press this week, however, the semiofficial al-Ahram has in effect warned the Soviets not to assume too much from Sadat's willingness to brief them on the shake-up. In a front-page editorial, al-Ahram categorically rejected foreign "intervention in domestic affairs."

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HUNGARY

The status of Cardinal Mindszenty, who has spent the past 15 years exiled in our Embassy in Budapest, is being given fresh and serious study by Hungarian and Vatican diplomats. Following a meeting last month between Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter and the Pope, a Vatican negotiator and Cardinal Koenig of Austria are expected to arrive in Budapest soon with some specific proposals in hand.

In the past, similar negotiations have run aground because of Mindszenty's insistence on full restitution of previous titles and complete exoneration. He also has consistently refused to promise to abstain from antiregime activities once he leaves his self-imposed exile.

The Vatican has always deferred to the Cardinal's position, but the new developments suggest that Pope Paul has become more receptive to advice that he take a firmer stand with Mindszenty. Next March the Cardinal will reach the mandatory retirement age of 80, and the Pope may consider this an opportune time to prepare for the appointment for a replacement. The Kadar regime's recent display of interest in improving relations with the Church also provides the Vatican with new leverage to deal with the case.

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NOTES

North Korea: In recent weeks, two North Koreans--a diplomat in Moscow and a news service official in Tokyo--have suggested to two US newsmen that they consider possible visits to North Korea. In taking a leaf from Peking's book, Pyongyang may be seeking to avoid becoming isolated by the movement in Sino-US relations. The North Koreans may also hope that visits by American newsmen will cause consternation in Seoul, which already is jumpy over trends in US Asian policy.

USSR: There are signs that the Soviets are preparing for the launch shortly of another Mars probe. Three support ships that monitored the earlier launches have maintained their stations,

The probe launched on 19 May appears to be functioning normally. An earlier one, fired on 10 May, failed shortly after launch.

USSR: The submarine tender that entered Caribbean waters last week arrived on 25 May at the port of Antilla in northeastern Cuba. Soviet and Cuban press releases have stated that the tender and a submarine would visit Cuba in late May and early June, but the submarine has not yet been detected. An ocean rescue tug that has been in Cuba since last September is also in Antilla. The two submarine support barges, which also arrived last September, remain in Cienfuegos.

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